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ABSTRACT

This document contains a list of 19 research questions completed by the staff of the Teacher Education Program. The ideas are stated in very brief terms, but each idea has behind it a tentative research plan which can be expanded into a design to fit conditions that exist in any given preservice or inservice teacher education setting. The major concern is in the implications of these questions for the practical problem of developing more effective products to improve teaching. (Author/RT)

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Teacher Education Program

POSSIBLE RESEARCH QUESTIONS RELATED TO THE MINICOURSE MODEL

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The following is a list of research questions that have been completed by the staff of the Teacher Education Program. These ideas are stated in very brief terms, but each idea has behind it a tentative research plan which can be expanded into a design that will fit conditions that exist in any given preservice or inservice teacher educational setting. Although research projects built upon these ideas would contribute to knowledge in the behavioral sciences, the main interest of the Laboratory is in the implications of these questions to the practical problem of developing more effective products for the improvement of teaching.

1. Are behavioral outcomes on minicourses influenced by giving subjects criteria for performance? For example, on Minicourse 1 the field test data could be used as a basis for setting up specific performance criteria on each skill.
2. Will teachers adopt behavior of model teachers with whom they identify positively to a greater degree than those with whom they identify negatively?
3. What is the effect of principal interest and praise upon the behavior of teachers taking the minicourse?

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4. What is the optimal number of replays of microteach lessons? What are the characteristics of teachers who profit most and least from extra replays?
5. How effective is audio feedback on microteach and reteach lessons versus video feedback?
6. What is the most effective type of model lesson sequence?
   a. Minicourse 1 model - 2 versions: first for discrimination training with behaviors cued by numbers or tones. Second essentially same except narrator identifies behavior.
   b. Minicourse 3 model - one version with stop action after behavior and immediate narrator identification of the behavior.
   c. X model - one version, behaviors cued by numbers during lesson and then behavior only reshown and identified after lesson.
7. To what extend does unfamiliarity with the VTR give spuriously poor behavior on pre-tapes?
8. What is the long term effect of Minicourse 1? i.e., what is current performance level of teachers who participated in the main field test version of Minicourse 1?
9. To what extent does preliminary cueing change the pre-course performance on minicourses (i.e., giving teacher a list of the minicourse behaviors).
10. What personality characteristics relate to improved learning in the minicourse? (The University of Texas R & D Center Data may give some clues on what behaviors are worth checking.)
11. To what extent will including questions at beginning and end of instructional and model lessons increase learning? (There are studies that suggest that such questions improve learning.)

12. What kinds of skills are best learned by the minicourse model, what kinds are not learned? (Comparative analysis of results of Minicourses 1, 2, 3, 5 and 8 should answer this.)
13. How effective is the minicourse in a roleplaying situation in which peers play role of students as compared with use of regular students?
14. A serious problem in many preservice programs is finding enough competent teachers to work with teacher trainees during student teaching. This problem plus recent research on the effectiveness of student teaching suggests that change in the conventional student teaching programs are in order. A major preservice study would compare the teaching effectiveness of students in a conventional student teaching program with those involved in a combination of student teaching and microteaching. The experimental treatment could involve devoting one-third of student teaching time to highly focused student teaching and two-thirds to the completion of three minicourses. Such a project would evaluate student teacher effectiveness not only in terms of specific minicourse behaviors but also in terms of more global indicators of the classroom climate such as the Flanders Interaction Analysis System, Medley's OsCAR System, etc.
15. A series of studies can focus on changes in pupil behavior related to specific teaching skills developed in the minicourses. For example, it might be hypothesized that teachers who successfully complete Minicourse 9 and ask increased numbers of higher cognitive questions will develop higher levels of pupil skill in answering such questions and in dealing effectively with problems involving higher order thinking.

16. Learning studies generally indicate that active involvement in the learning task results in higher achievement than passive learning. It would be desirable to develop one instructional and model lesson in which viewer involvement is maximized and compare learning gains from this lesson against one in which there is no active viewer involvement.

17. Transfer of minicourse skills to the regular classroom might be increased if the minicourse used some combination of microteaching and regular class practice. One possible design would compare the conventional minicourse model (microteach - VTR feedback - reteach - VTR feedback) with a sequence such as: microteach - VTR feedback - regular class practice - pupil feedback.

18. The minicourse relies heavily upon intrinsic teacher motivation (i.e., professional pride, desire to improve, etc.). To what extent can teacher behavior be further improved by a system of extrinsic motivation in which reward is contingent upon post-course performance? In the inservice situation it might be possible to vary the amount of salary credit a teacher would receive. A simplified example, in Minicourse 1, if terminal teacher talk during discussion lessons exceeded 50 percent of discussion time the teacher would receive no credit; 40 - 49 percent one unit of credit; 30 - 39 percent, two units; 20 - 29 percent, three units; under 20 percent four units. The actual criteria adopted would be much more complex than this example and would also include qualitative appraisal.

19. Research by Bandura indicated that showing an individual a model tape in which the model is reinforced upon performing desirable behaviors and punished or not reinforced when performing undesirable behaviors will operate in somwhat the same manner as if the individual viewing the model were being reinforced himself. Therefore, it would be possible to build verbal reinforcement into the model tapes as a device for reinforcing teachers who were watching these model tapes. Several types of model reinforcement would be possible. Perhaps the most promising would be to show an authority figure praising the teacher at the conclusion of the model lesson.